U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OPEN GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

APRIL 6, 2011

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Introduction

At the direction of the President, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued an Open Government Directive (M-10-06) on December 8, 2009 to take specific actions to implement the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration which form the cornerstone of an open government. Transparency promotes accountability by providing the public with information about what the Government is doing. Participation allows members of the public to contribute ideas and expertise so that their government can make policies with the benefit of information that is widely dispersed in society. Collaboration improves the effectiveness of Government by encouraging partnerships and cooperation within the Federal Government, across levels of government, and between the Government and private institutions. In order to meet the spirit and intent of the OMB memorandum, the Department of State took the following steps towards the goal of creating a more open government:

- Published government information online to increase accountability, promoted informed participation by the public, and took steps to expand access to information by making it available online in open formats.

- Improved the quality of Government information available to the public by having senior leaders make certain that the information conformed to OMB guidance on information quality, and that adequate systems and processes are in place within the agencies to promote such conformity.

- Created and institutionalized a culture of open government by creating an unprecedented and sustained level of openness and accountability in every level.

- Created an enabling policy framework for Open Government by implementing emerging technologies that open new forms of communication between a government and the people.

The Open Government Plan produced by the Department of State emphasized our commitment by providing reports on the efforts underway to ensure better transparency, participation and collaboration, as well as providing information on flagship initiatives that serve to demonstrate the depth of that commitment.

Leadership and Broad Involvement in Open Government
Secretary Clinton is personally committed to Open Government. The Secretary participates regularly in public forums and has been actively engaged with a wide range of stakeholders in pursuing US foreign policy objectives.   The Department's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) has been designated as the senior official accountable for the quality and objectivity of, and internal controls over the Federal Spending information publically disseminated[1]. The Chief Information Officer (CIO) has been

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[1] Per OMB Memorandum M-10-06 of December 8, 2009 the senior official is "accountable for the quality and objectivity of and internal controls over the Federal spending information publicly disseminated through such public venues as USAsending.gov or similar websites. The senior accountable official also participates in the agency's Senior Management Council or similar governance structure for the agency-wide internal control assessment pursuant to the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act."

designated as the lead Department official for overall operational implementation of the Open Government initiative. Each bureau, lead by an Assistant Secretary, will be responsible for the information originating in that bureau.

Past efforts and successes will provide a springboard for fulfilling the requirements of the Open Government Directive. Looking forward, the Department's bureaus will participate in Open Government, by contributing data sets for posting for the public and by participating in public events and collaboration opportunities. This approach will provide a rich information exchange with the public and will ensure that all aspects of the Department's broad mission and expertise are reflected in Open Government efforts.

Purpose of the Open Government Implementation Plan

This Open Government Implementation Plan is the Department's roadmap that describes how the goals of the Open Government Plan—transparency, participation, collaboration—will be executed and reports on the various initiatives' status. It will be updated quarterly to include new initiatives, and existing initiatives that have been expanded or revised will also be updated. The plan has been developed collaboratively, under the direction of an Open Government Working Group composed of leading bureaus currently active in outreach and engagement. The Open Government Implementation Plan is being closely coordinated with other efforts such as the development of a new Information Technology Strategic Plan, ensuring that efforts related to the Open Government Initiative will receive priority for resources.

Changes will be made in the plan as a result of new or modified directives, in response to lessons learned through execution, from input from other organizations, and from suggestions from the public. The plan will be easily accessible through the Department's Open Government website shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Department of State Open Government Web Site (www.state.gov/open)

Schedule and Status

Virtual Student Foreign Service (VSFS)

The Virtual Student Foreign Service (VSFS) program is the State Department's virtual eInternship program for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students, which is administered by the Bureau of Information Resource Management's Office of eDiplomacy. Virtual eInternships involve work that is done entirely remotely and through a computer. eInterns do not report to a physical work location at an Embassy or Consulate. Instead, eInterns work on projects from their dorm room, apartment, academic institution, or other location determined by the student. Secretary Clinton announced VSFS at the 2009 New York University commencement speech as part of a growing effort by the State Department to harness technology and a commitment to global service among young people to facilitate new forms of diplomatic engagement.

Current Status: Implemented at http://www.state.gov/vsfs/.

Planned Activities: Double number of participants by January 2011, develop plan to scale up the VSFS by January 2011.

Human Rights.Gov

HumanRights.gov is the official United States Government (USG) website for international human rights related information. The site's search function links users directly with news, reports and explanatory information from the State Department and other USG partners, allowing for easy access to publicly available documents. We provide a one-stop site for researching the USG's involvement in international human rights. The site was designed in the letter and spirit of President Barack Obama's Open Government Directive issued in January 2009, requiring federal agencies to take specific steps to achieve key milestones in transparency, participation, and collaboration.

Current Status: Implemented at http://www.HumanRights.gov/.

Planned Activities: Add social media integration and customized and integrated news feeds.

Foreign Assistance.Gov

The ForeignAssistance.gov site was created in response to the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and President Obama's Open Government Initiative. As part of our efforts to pursue greater transparency in government, the Administration has developed an Aid Transparency Agenda for Action, of which this Foreign Assistance Dashboard is an important part. The U.S. Government is committed to making information on foreign assistance programs more transparent, accessible, and compatible with international standards.

Current Status: The Dashboard is still in its early stages of development. A prototype website was launched, including USAID and DoS foreign assistance data and baseline functionality in September 2010. The Dashboard currently incorporates budget, financial, program, and performance data in a

standard form from all USG agencies receiving or implementing foreign assistance, humanitarian, and/or development funds.

Planned Activities: Establish more extensive foreign assistance data standards with inter-agency working group. (Ongoing)

Web Video

The U.S. Department of State provides video for video.state.gov, America.gov, U.S. embassy websites, and several blogs. Video is also made widely available on social networking platforms such as YouTube™, Facebook™, and Flickr™. These video products cover a variety of subjects from senior staff remarks and briefings, to videos that feature elements of U.S. Public Diplomacy.

Current Status: Providing video for video.state.gov, America.gov, U.S. embassy websites, and several blogs.

Planned Activities: Increase the volume and availability of web video products, both live and on-demand, by 25% by Q4, FY2011

Blogs

DipNote, the State Department's official blog at blogs.state.gov, gives the public context, clarity, and behind-the-scenes insights on U.S. foreign policy from State Department employees who are directly engaged in the work of diplomacy.

Current Status: DipNote is available for the iPhone™ and Blackberry™.

Planned Activities: Increase active engagement between Department officials and public commentators by 25% by Q4, FY2011.

Interactive Travel Map

The Bureau of Public Affairs created an interactive map to track Secretary Clinton's foreign travel.

Current Status: The map enables users to see where the Secretary is at any given time, calculates miles traveled (throughout the trip and cumulatively as Secretary), displays photos from the road (posted on Flickr™), and features the Secretary's remarks and blogs. Each stopping point on a given trip allows users to comment on that point of the trip.

Planned Activities: No planned upgrades.

Twitter™

The Department uses Twitter™ to disseminate information during the Secretary's travels, highlight key points made during the daily press briefings and high-profile public speeches, and communicate

directly with the public by responding to their questions. The Department also corrects misinformation using Twitter™.

Current Status: Twitter™ is in use by the Department to disseminate information and correct misinformation.

Planned Activities: Increase targeted use of Twitter™ by 30% by Q4, FY2011.

YouTube™
The U.S. Department of State maintains several YouTube™ video channels featuring public affairs, public diplomacy, and U.S. embassy videos.

Current Status: YouTube™ is in use by the Department to disseminate information.

Planned Activities: Increase the volume and availability of YouTube™ video products by 25% by Q4, FY2011.

Facebook™
The U.S. Department of State maintains a presence on Facebook™. Several U.S. embassies and consulates also maintain Facebook™ pages.

Current Status: A Facebook™ presence for the Department and several U.S. embassies and consulates has been created at http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/usdos?ref=ts.

Planned Activities: Increase active engagement with the public using Facebook™ by 25% by Q4, FY2011.

Text the Secretary
Text the Secretary is a mobile and interactive forum in which the public can submit questions to Secretary Clinton.

Current Status: The forum is in use by the Secretary to interact with the public.

Planned Activities: No activities or enhancements are planned.

ExchangeConnect
ExchangeConnect is an international social network managed by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs that highlights first-person stories about cultures, commonalities, and exchange program experiences.

Current Status: The social network has been implemented and currently has 30,000 members.

Planned Activities: Expand the ExchangeConnect social network by Q4, FY2011.

Web Chats

A web chat is a discussion between two or more participants that takes place through a web site without requiring the user to install any specialized software. The Department of State web chats are moderated, allowing screening of questions and answers for inappropriate language, off-topic content and other questionable material.

Current Status: Over 200 web chats have been conducted, including many by overseas posts.

Planned Activities: Implement efforts to engage both domestic U.S. and international audiences by Q4, FY2011

Podcasts

The Department produces podcasts for download on popular platforms such as iTunes™ to include the Secretary's remarks, daily press briefings, and various special features.

Current Status: The system has been implemented.

Planned Activities: Increase the volume and availability of its podcast products by 40% by Q4, FY2011.

FOIA Request Processing Operations

The Department of State has a centralized FOIA Program, with one office receiving and coordinating the processing of all requests made to the Department. The Department's E-FOIA website (http://www.state.gov/m/a/ips/), which includes the FOIA Electronic Reading Room and collections of declassified documents, contains a wealth of information for the public on the Department's information access programs.

Current Status: The office currently processes about 30,000 requests a year, but has a 21,000 request backlog.

Planned Activities: IRM will work with FOIA to determine most common FOIA requests to help reduce requests by providing the information as data sets.